



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **District Man Pleads Guilty to Second Degree Murder After Jury Convicts Him of Numerous Other Charges Charges Stem From Deadly Shooting Rampage**

WASHINGTON - Seneca Benjamin, 33, pled guilty today to second degree murder while armed in connection with a deadly shooting rampage in which one person was killed and three others were shot in the head or chest, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Benjamin's plea came while a jury was deliberating his case in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. The jury already had convicted him of 16 counts in connection with the shootings, including assault with intent to kill while armed, aggravated assault while armed and mayhem while armed. At the time of the plea, the jury apparently was trying to decide between the charges of first degree murder while armed and second degree murder while armed.

Benjamin, of Washington, D.C., will be sentenced on January 21, 2011 by the Honorable Judge Michael L. Rankin. He faces a potential sentence of more than 100 years in prison.

According to the government's evidence, on April 26, 2009, Benjamin shot and killed Monique Nalle, 42. He also shot and wounded Nalle's fiancé, Andre L. Benjamin; Andre Benjamin's son, Andre A. Benjamin, and Whitfield Arnett. The defendant is Andre L. Benjamin's nephew and Andre A. Benjamin's cousin. The shootings occurred in the unit block of Bryant Street NW, where Andre L. Benjamin lived with Nalle.

The carnage began at approximately 2:30 p.m. on April 26. The defendant periodically spent time at the Bryant Street residence and went there that day. After entering the home, he went to the second floor bedroom in which Nalle and Andre L. Benjamin lived. He asked about the location of his Mac-11, a machine gun. Nalle did not know where it was.

Moments later, Nalle stated that neighbors had said that the defendant had slashed the tires on Nalle's son's car. The defendant denied doing so. He then turned around as if to leave the bedroom. But instead of heading out, he turned back, pulled out a handgun and started shooting at Nalle, who was about ten feet away, unarmed and defenseless. She was shot in the head and the

chest. Andre L. Benjamin had been watching television as the defendant came into the bedroom. When he realized what was happening to his fiancé, he dove at the defendant in an attempt to protect her. The defendant turned his gun on Andre L. Benjamin and shot him in the face.

The defendant then headed downstairs, where he encountered Whitfield Arnett, a resident of the house who was sitting in a chair. Like the others, Arnett was unarmed and defenseless. The defendant fired two shots at Arnett, hitting him in the neck, chest and fingers.

Andre A. Benjamin was on the front walk when he heard the shots. He crept back into the house and ran into the defendant, who had already shot Arnett. The defendant shot Andre A. Benjamin in the chest. He then fled through the back door. He was arrested four days later.

Monique Nalle died from her wounds. Andre L. Benjamin called 911 seeking help. The riveting call was played for the jury, and the jury could hear the 911 operator plead for Andre L. Benjamin to live, as his breathing became increasingly labored. Andre L. Benjamin survived, but lost the sight in his right eye as a result of the shooting. Arnett can no longer eat solid foods and suffered nerve damage. Andre A. Benjamin suffered no permanent physical injuries.

The jury returned guilty verdicts relatively quickly on most of the charges. However, the jury had difficulty deciding the murder charge. After the jury had three times reported that it was deadlocked, the defendant pled guilty to second degree murder while armed.

In announcing today's plea, U.S. Attorney Machen praised Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Detective Alfred Thomas Austin-Braxton, whose tireless efforts led to the arrest of the defendant and the presence at trial of critical witnesses. U.S. Attorney Machen also praised Detectives Brian Wise and Michael Pepperman, who assisted in the investigation of the case and the preparation for trial. U.S. Attorney Machen praised evidence technicians Stanley Rembish, Ralph Nitz, Michael DePrince and J.D. Smith, who took painstaking efforts to gather firearms evidence from multiple locations.

U.S. Attorney Machen praised MPD Officer Grant Greenwalt, who led the presentation of the "360 degree view," a sophisticated and innovative method of presenting a panoramic display of a crime scene that makes it appear as if the viewer is present at the scene. This trial was the first time that the 360 view had been presented in Superior Court. In addition, U.S. Attorney Machen praised Officers Raymond Hawkins, James Love and Thomas Krmenac, who responded to the scene under extremely dangerous circumstances and assisted in the investigation. U.S. Attorney Machen praised Paralegal Debra Joyner, who provided critical support work during the investigation and trial, and Litigation Support Specialist Leif Hickling, who prepared numerous trial exhibits. U.S. Attorney Machen praised Victim Advocate Marcia Rinker for the extraordinary services she provided to the victim's family and witnesses. Finally, U.S. Attorney Machen praised Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven B. Snyder, who investigated and tried this matter.